

O'Brien, Shannon L -FS

From: Skorkowsky, Robert -FS
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 10:22 AM
To: O'Brien, Shannon L -FS
Subject: FW: Rulemaking for Alaska Roadless Areas EIS

Email for project record – related to ESA/endangered species coordination with NMFS

Please replace the version I sent you yesterday with this thread as it includes a clarification of a typo and also a reply from NMFS.

Thank you



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From: Skorkowsky, Robert -FS
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 11:20 AM
To: 'Kristin Mabry - NOAA Federal' <kristin.mabry@noaa.gov>
Cc: 'Aleria Jensen - NOAA Federal' <aleria.jensen@noaa.gov>; 'Jon Kurland' <Jon.Kurland@noaa.gov>
Subject: RE: Rulemaking for Alaska Roadless Areas EIS

Thanks Kristin -

I noticed a typo in my trailing email that I wanted to make sure was clarified correctly

- The alternatives are administrative in nature and a decision would **NOT** stipulate or require any ground disturbing activity.

No reply needed – just sharing for clarity

Robert



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From: Kristin Mabry - NOAA Federal <kristin.mabry@noaa.gov>

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 11:01 AM

To: Skorkowsky, Robert -FS <robert.skorkowsky@usda.gov>

Cc: Aleria Jensen - NOAA Federal <alerial.jensen@noaa.gov>; Jon Kurland <Jon.Kurland@noaa.gov>

Subject: Re: Rulemaking for Alaska Roadless Areas EIS

Robert,

Thank you for informing NMFS of the Forest Service's "no effect" determination.

Kristin Mabry

On Tue, Aug 11, 2020 at 3:44 PM Skorkowsky, Robert -FS <robert.skorkowsky@usda.gov> wrote:

Hi Kristin – Thank you for your time today. I am just sending this email to capture some of the elements of our conversation related to the EIS that the Forest Service is working on for the Rulemaking for Alaska Roadless Areas (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54511>).

My call was intended to follow-up with you and your office regarding recent correspondence you have had with my colleague Don Martin regarding ESA listed species and resources near the Tongass National Forest. Thank you for generating a list of T&E species for our office on 7/23 when the web mapper server was down and the follow-up clarification correspondence with me regarding my question on critical habitat for the western DPS of the Steller sea lion near the Tongass NF.

As I mentioned on our call I am stepping into this project following the retirement of the FS Regional Wildlife Bio and TE program manager this past March. I have reviewed the DEIS, and public comments on the DEIS, and I am helping the team finalize the FEIS. As we discussed, the preferred action for the rulemaking would only affect the Tongass roadless areas and not those on the Chugach NF. The details of the alternatives considered including the preferred alternative can be found in the link above in chapter 2 of the DEIS. During our call I shared with you my assessment and determination that implementing an action alternative associated with the rulemaking EIS is anticipated to have no effect to any ESA listed species or resources. My intent of sharing my assessment and conclusion with you was to ensure that you were informed regarding the rationale related to the finding and make sure there was nothing obvious that I was overlooking in my assessment. The biological analysis for ESA listed species and resources is in the FEIS and the associated project record, but was not pulled into a formal biological assessment document because of the no

effect conclusion that was reached for ESA listed species and resources. I recognized that the Service does normally not consult or concur with no effect determinations, but I wanted to ensure your office was aware of my findings and conclusions. I had reached out previously to Doug Cooper with FWS for the same purpose.

A couple of items I mentioned during the call as aspects of the reasons for my findings, outlined here in very broad characterization:

- The alternatives are administrative in nature and a decision would stipulate or require any ground disturbing activity.
- There are no proposed actions that exist which are reasonable certain to occur as a result of the adoption of the final rule that would affect the roadless areas.
- The Tongass Forest Plan as amended is the programmatic decision document that authorizes appropriate uses, goals, objectives, and management constraints for existing and future projects. The rulemaking alternatives would not result in any changes to already planned goals, outputs or activities associated with the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan remains the programmatic document that frames the appropriate management uses of the National Forest.
- If the preferred alternative is adopted in the final rule then the 2001 Roadless Rule would no longer apply to the Tongass NF. This would result in the areas previously considered roadless to be managed according to the existing management prescription that has already been authorized through the Forest Planning process.
- Although the roadless rule covers approximately 9.4 million acres on the Tongass, only approximately 188,000 acres of land would be added to what is considered suitable for timber harvest. These lands are currently not available because of the roadless designation's prohibition on timber harvest in roadless areas. This does not mean that these lands will be harvested, rather that they become available under the existing framework outlined in the amended forest plan consistent with anticipated and previously discussed forest management goals and objectives.

Thank you again for your time today, if I missed anything or mischaracterized any element of our conversation, please correct me in a reply to this email.

Robert



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Kristin R. Mabry

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